



# Florida House of Representatives

Representative Mark S. Pafford

*Minority Deputy Whip*

District 88

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**

2240 Palm Beach Lakes  
Blvd., Suite 102  
West Palm Beach, FL  
33409-3403  
Phone: (561) 682-0156  
Fax: (561) 682-0158

**CAPITOL OFFICE:**

1401 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300  
Phone: (850) 488-0175

**COMMITTEES:**

Full Appropriations Council  
on General Government &  
Health Care

Healthy Seniors  
Appropriations Committee

Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Policy  
Committee

Military & Local Affairs  
Policy Committee

House Democratic Policy  
Committee

**STAFF:**

Audrey Piedra  
Chief Legislative Assistant

Christina Travieso  
District Assistant

May 12, 2009

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist:

I write to express my grave concerns about proposed severe cuts to the Department of Elder Affairs budget. As I have previously mentioned to you, I would hope that you veto the General Appropriations Act as it will adversely affect more than 29,000 frail and low-income elders throughout Florida.

Unless you take action, vulnerable Floridians will continue to be neglected and some will be left alone to suffer and die while on waiting lists for services.

As a member of the Healthy Seniors Appropriations Committee and the Full Appropriations Council on General Government and Health Care in the Florida House of Representatives, I was disturbed to learn that such severe cuts made it into the Conference Report on Senate Bill 2600—the General Appropriations Act.

During the 2009 legislative session, I made repeated attempts to notify leadership in both chambers that the proposed cuts would hurt vulnerable seniors statewide. Further, on April 17 and May 7, I argued on the House floor that seniors will be left in peril and without care if these cuts are imposed.

The spending cuts of greatest concern to me affect Local Service Programs, Home Care for the Elderly, Community Care for the Elderly, Contracted Services, and Alzheimer's Disease Initiative programs. Cuts in these programmatic areas would endanger seniors and their caregivers, and force seniors into nursing homes unnecessarily.

Page 2

These cuts of \$2.5 million are an assault on our seniors – and, I believe, they could have been avoided. Approximately \$2.5 million would have kept the budget for the Department of Elder Affairs at the current 2008-2009 spending level. In addition, I am told that for \$20 million Florida could eliminate entirely its waiting lists for these services.

During my debate on the House floor, I described a constituent of mine from Royal Palm Beach who has been on a state waiting list for services for more than two years. This woman will be 103 on May 22. I am wondering how long she will have to wait for services, and what will happen to seniors like her under cuts in the proposed state budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10. We cannot wait another year to fix what has been left undone.

Since one in every five Floridian is a senior and given the importance of retirees to our state's economy, I remind you that our elders are an economic engine that should be respected. Our seniors have made great contributions to our democracy.

On behalf of Florida's seniors, I urge you to veto this harmful budget and call a special session for the Legislature to pass an appropriate spending plan for our state. As you might imagine, many seniors on waiting lists for services cannot wait another 14 months for the care that they need today.

With kind regards, I am,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark S. Pafford', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark S. Pafford  
State Representative  
District 88

cc: Eric Eikenberg, Chief of Staff  
E. Douglas Beach, Secretary, Department of Elder Affairs  
Jaime Estremera-Fitzgerald, Area Agency on Aging of Palm  
Beach/Treasure Coast